



SANDRA SHEWRY
Director

State of California—Health and Human Services Agency
Department of Health Care Services



ARNOLD SCHWARZENEGGER
Governor

July 13, 2007

TO: ALL COUNTY WELFARE DIRECTORS Letter No.: 07-16
ALL COUNTY ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICERS
ALL COUNTY MEDI-CAL PROGRAM SPECIALIST/LIAISONS
ALL COUNTY HEALTH EXECUTIVES
ALL COUNTY MENTAL HEALTH DIRECTORS

SUBJECT: Changes to Medi-Cal Eligibility Data System (MEDS) Access Procedures

The purpose of this letter is to let you know about changes to MEDS access and the impact of these changes to Medi-Cal eligibility staff. This letter also contains reminders regarding security procedures and MEDS access.

BACKGROUND

The MEDS System contains data from the federal Social Security Administration (SSA) that is related to Social Security beneficiaries, Supplemental Security Income beneficiaries, certain veterans' benefits, and certain tax return information. To access data that is obtained from the SSA, the Department of Health Care Services (DHCS) is required to enter into a data sharing agreement with the SSA and comply with all requirements in that agreement. As a result of recent directives from the federal Office of Management and Budget, the SSA made substantial changes in the data sharing agreement that will be effective July 1, 2007. The new agreement focuses on limiting access to SSA data to only authorized employees who need it to perform their official duties and the security procedures relating to protecting the privacy of SSA personally identifiable information.

Compliance with this agreement is required by the SSA in order for the State and the counties to have continued access to SSA data. This agreement requires DHCS to perform oversight of the SSA data being accessed by multiple users throughout the state who are agents and contractors of DHCS. To ensure that county access to MEDS and the SSA data included within MEDS complies with the new data sharing agreement, DHCS will be implementing an additional login process for MEDS users.

NEW MEDS LOG ON PROCESS

To ensure compliance of State and county MEDS users with the latest federal security requirements for SSA data, DHCS will implement a new Resource Access Control Facility (RACF) user ID and password standard for each county and state MEDS user. Effective October 15, 2007, access to the MEDS Customer Information control System (CICS) will be changed to require a RACF user ID and password in addition to the current MEDS log on process. These changes will require county users to sign on to the CICS region first using their RACF user ID and password and then to sign on to the MEDS application using the current MEDS name and password.

This new system will allow DHCS to conform to security standards that meet SSA requirements (e.g. change/update their RACF passwords every 60 days and comply with standard user ID and password length requirements). This change will enhance DHCS's ability to identify anomalies in MEDS usage, to update password protection and controls, and to monitor MEDS user activity.

The following paragraphs identify the steps, at a high level, to fully implement the new RACF logon:

1. Each county must provide additional information for each of their county MEDS users. This information must be provided to the state by July 31, 2007. This additional information will be needed for users who only make inquiries, as well as those who have authority to make changes in MEDS. In most counties, this will include eligibility, In-Home Support Services, and some Child Welfare Services staff. A template (with some fields pre-populated by DHCS) and instructions for this process has been provided to counties on July 12, 2007.
2. DHCS will create new RACF user IDs for each county MEDS user and provide that information to counties by August 31, 2007.
3. DHCS will develop on-line training on the new RACF user logon process. The training will be available to the counties beginning no later than September 14, 2007. For counties without on-line access, alternative training will be provided.
4. County MEDS users must complete the training and submit the required MEDS security form to the State by no later than September 28, 2007.
5. DHCS will activate the new RACF logon effective October 15, 2007

We realize that this will require a significant amount of effort in a short period of time and appreciate your attention to this critical work.

2) Impact on Eligibility Staff:

- a) Beginning October 15, 2007, eligibility workers will login using RACF in addition to the current MEDS logon.
- b) No later than September 14, 2007, training on the new RACF logon process will be available to county eligibility staff.

3) Security reminders for county staff:

- a) Do not share your MEDS password or user name, keep it confidential. Do not write it down or post it where it might be accessed or include it in a data file, log-on script or a macro.
- b) Passwords are to be changed immediately if revealed or compromised.
- c) For changes to logon ID or password, the county must continue to submit a change request through Medi-Cal Eligibility Division.
- d) Any suspected unauthorized use of an ID or password is to be reported to one's supervisor or the county's security officer immediately.
- e) Remember that any unauthorized release of confidential information may make you subject to civil and criminal sanctions pursuant to the provisions of the Welfare and Institutions Code, Section 14100.2.
- f) Counties must have documented disciplinary procedures and sanctions for the misuse of MEDS access.

If you have questions about this letter, please call Ms. Ana Felines at (916) 552-9507 or email her at ana.felines@dhcs.ca.gov.

Sincerely,

**Original Signed By
Maria Enriquez for**

Vivian Auble, Chief
Medi-Cal Eligibility Division